



News Release

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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ESPA Agreement Expires at Midnight

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Midnight tonight marks the expiration of the “Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer Mitigation, Recovery and Restoration Agreement for 2004” designed to stay for one year, all delivery calls by senior priority spring users against junior priority ground water users, while giving both sides time to attempt to work out a long-term solution to persistent water shortages plaguing Southern Idaho.

The Agreement was in response to a call made by Rangen, Inc., and a subsequent order issued by IDWR Director Karl J. Dreher, which would have resulted in the curtailment of ground water diversions from approximately 1,300 ground water wells above the canyon rim northeast of the Thousand Springs area.

That determination was based on the Department’s original ground water computer model for the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer, which was calibrated to a narrow set of conditions and had not been updated for more than a decade. In May 2004, the Department completed development of a new ground water model for the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer that significantly refines the calculated depletions to spring flows caused ground water pumping.

Based on the expiration of the Agreement, and the availability of refined information regarding the effects of ground water depletions, the Director has issued an order rescinding the Rangen Order. A new order in response to the call by Rangen, Inc. will be issued by the Director on or about April 1 and will be based on results from the new ground water model.

Given the other pending delivery calls filed by 7 canal companies and irrigation districts coupled with and Southern Idaho’s worsening water supply situation, curtailment of junior priority ground water rights remains likely.

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Individuals and other entities holding or dependent on junior priority ground water rights are cautioned to make planting and other decisions accordingly.

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